**MARILYNN AND SHEILA BRASS, THE BRASS SISTERS**

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**ABOUT THE BRASS SISTERS:**

Longtime Cambridge residents Marilynn and Sheila Brass have 132 years of combined baking and cooking experience.

They presently Host and Co-Executive produce their television series, THE FOOD FLIRTS, for PBS. The series features the sisters engaging with chefs, restauranteurs, and food purveyors, to explore the diversity of cuisines and cultures in Cambridge and Boston.

THE FOOD FLIRTS is one of three nominees for a James Beard Foundation Award for The Best Television Show, On Location.

They are the authors of *Baking With The Brass Sisters* (St. Martin’s Press 2015), *Heirloom Cooking With The Brass* *Sisters*, (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2008) and *Heirloom Baking With* *The Brass Sisters* (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2006), which was one of three finalists for the James Beard Foundation award in the Dessert and Baking category.

Calling the sisters "Dessert Geniuses," *Food &Wine Magazine* selected both of their books for its annual volumes, *The Best of the* *Best 25 Cookbooks, People Magazine* chose *Heirloom Baking* for their *Holiday Gift Guide.*

Marilynn and Sheila are very active in the Cambridge and Boston food world. They often do events and demonstrations featuring heirloom recipes from their collection of 250 handwritten Manuscript Cookbooks.

**THEIR MOST RECENT EVENTS AND AWARDS**:

**TASTE AWARD:**

The Brass sisters were honored with as “Break Out Foodies of the Year by the Taste Awards.” The annual Taste Awards are the premier broadcast awards show celebrating the Lifestyle Entertainment Industry.

The Brass Sisters appeared on CHRONICLE on WCVB-TV as part of a show on Baking. They have been nominated and confirmed as *Cambridge Food Heroes* for 2016. They have participated in the Taste of Cambridge, the Readable Feast Festival, the WGBH Food & Wine Festival, the Let’s Talk About Food Festival. In November, they will be doing a demonstration and talk, their 12th on *Holiday Baking With The Brass Sisters*, at the Xhibition Kitchen.

**CAMBRIDGE FOOD HEROES 2016**

The Brass Sisters were honored to receive a Cambridge Food Hero Award for 2016 “for their exceptional commitment to the Cambridge people and community.”

**BOSTON, INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN:**

Marilynn and Sheila appear in Boston*, Inspirational Women*, by Bill and Kerry Brett.  Bill Brett is an award-winning photographer who has shot the faces and events of Boston for more than 40 years. The sisters were also featured in a two-page article about their collection of culinary antiques in the Boston *Globe* Magazine’s food issue. The article included a full-page photograph of Marilynn and Sheila.  They have considerable face recognition and are often stopped for a chat or advice oncooking and baking on the street, while shopping at local grocery stores, or eating at restaurants.

**TELEVISION AND RADIO:**

Aside from their Hosting and Co-Executive producing their new series THE FOOD FLIRTS for PBS, the Brass Sisters have established a presence on national and local television all over the country.  Marilynn and Sheila have appeared on the Cooking Channel, hosting a one-hour special, *The Brass* *Sisters Celebrate the Holidays* by cooking and baking a holiday meal with firefighters from the local Taylor Square Fire House in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

They also hosted the PBS show, *The Brass Sisters: Queens of Comfort Food*¸ which featured the sisters preparing an informal dinner party for their friends by leading viewers on a gastronomic tour of some of their favorite Cambridge haunts while sharing stories from their past.  In addition to the Cooking Channel program, Marilynn and Sheila appeared on *Throwdown with Bobby Flay* on the Food Network, beating Iron Chef Flay by baking their recipe for Pineapple Upside-Down Cake.

They have been guests on the PBS series, *Simply Ming* with Chef Ming Tsai using the chef’s master ingredients of rice wine vinegar and honey to make their original recipe for Chicken Salad with Mangos and Toasted Cashews. The episode was submitted for an Emmy by its producer, WGBH-TV, the PBS flagship station in Boston. Marilynn and Sheila also did a segment on chocolate with Chef Ming in an episode of his *East Meets West* series*.*

Marilynn and Sheila have presented segments and recipes on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered – Found Recipes* and the NPR blog, *The Salt*.  While on their book tours for *Heirloom Baking* and *Heirloom Cooking*, Marilynn and Sheila have appeared on local television and radio programs and in other media in 22 cities in 15 states around the country and Canada.

The Boston *Globe* Magazine devoted two complete Sunday food columns to recipes from *Heirloom Cooking*, and their third cookbook, *Baking With The Brass Sisters.* Their books are collected and treasured not only because of the reliability of the recipes or the culinary history they preserve, but because the sisters have been described as having “a beautiful voice.”  They can find the beauty, truth, or humor in anything from shredding a voluptuous red cabbage, to rescuing a sedate love letter from between the pages of a handwritten cookbook, to the moving story of a bread recipe retrieved after a daughter’s dream that she is baking with her late mother.  Like the Paris of Ernest Hemingway, the sisters like to describe their lives as “a moveable feast.”

**CULINARY ANTIQUES AND COOKBOOK COLLECTION:**

Marilynn and Sheila continue to be featured speakers at museums, libraries, meetings of culinary history associations, and have spoken three times at The JamesBeard Houseas part of its *Beard on Books* series.They have one of the country's most comprehensive collections of culinary antiques, including a copper *batterie de cuisine* from the early 19th century; chocolate, ice cream, candy, aspic, and other food molds; menus; and food advertising signs and artifacts. Their collection includes 6,500 cookbooks, some dating from the 1600s, and 1,800 books on antiques.  Their main focus has

been on manuscript cookbooks, which are compilations of handwritten recipes by home cooks, handed down through generations of families and friends.  They own 225 of these, the

earliest dating to just after the French and Indian War in the 18th century. These recipes provided the inspiration for *Heirloom* *Baking*, *Heirloom Cooking*, and their latest cookbook, *Baking With The Brass Sisters*.  The Brass Sisters have been called everything from recipe detectives to cultural anthropologists to guardians of the universal tradition of home-cooked meals.

The sisters were the North American Consultants for Miller’s Publications for 11 years in the 1990s and 2000s, responsible for photo shoots, research, and marketing information for the several books on antiques and collectibles that Miller’s Publications produce for the UK and US markets. They also wrote and produced the first section on rare and collectible cookbooks for Miller’s Publications.

The sisters were special guests on the PBS series, *Antiques Roadshow FYI*, taking viewers on a tour of their collection of culinary antiques, featuring their unrivaled assortment ofantiquefood molds.

**THE BRASS SISTERS CULINARY NETWORK:**

The sisters have a constantly growing network of friends and colleagues who are chefs, food writers, restaurateurs, television and radio producers.  They have established dialogs with companies that provide culinary product resources.  They have a presence on social media with their website, [www.thebrasssisters.com](http://www.thebrasssisters.com/), Facebook,  LinkedIn, and Twitter.  They constantly send out e-mails about their adventures whether it is testing a recipe for Nana May’s Irish Yeast Bread or winning a Throwdown against Bobby Flay.

Through *The Brass Sisters Home Baking/Cooking Network*, a collection of home cooks, food professionals, and people who love food, they have made themselves available on-line to answer questions about recipes, culinary history, antique culinary utensils, and ingredients.  Through the network, Marilynn and Sheila are able to exchange recipes, and family stories with people all over the country, creating a constantly growing audience for their experiences and for the books they love to write.

In addition, they still enjoy a vibrant on-going relationship with WGBH-TV, the Public Television station where they were long-time employees for more than 25 years.  Sheila was the Administrative Coordinator to the Vice President of National Programming, and Marilynn worked as a consultant, and for the How-Tos, the unit that produced *This Old House, The Victory Garden,* and *The New Yankee* *Workshop*. It was during their careers at WGBH that their cookbooks were conceived and recipes tested with the enthusiastic support of the entire station.

**PERMANENT CAMBRIDGE VIDEO SCULPTURE:**

In 2010, Marilynn and Sheila were selected to be part of a permanent video sculpture of notable residents of Cambridge, Massachusetts.  The project was conceived and executed by artist and architect, Michael Oatman and featured the sisters with selections from their library of cookbooks and collection of culinary antiques.

**EDUCATION:**

Sheila Brass majored in Fashion Design and Illustration at The Massachusetts College of Art and Design where she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree *cum laude* in 1958.

Sheila was a Fashion Designer in New York and Boston for ten years, and sales of her designs would have filled Fenway Park for a whole season.

Marilynn Brass was an English-Journalism Major at Northeastern University’s College of Arts, Media and Design where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree *cum laude* and with departmental honors in English in 1964. She received a fellowship to pursue English graduate studies at Northeastern, earning her Master of Arts degree there in 1966.

Marilynn created the Public Communications and Community Affairs Office at the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory after it was divested from MIT.